

Message Text

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ORIGIN SS-25

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TO AMEMBASSY BEIRUT IMMEDIATE

INFO AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS IMMEDIATE

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AMEMBASSY JIDDA IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T STATE 220264

EXDIS, FOR CHARGE KINSOLVING

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, MOPS, PEPR, LE, SY, IS

SUBJECT: SECURITY SITUATION IN LEBANON

1. NOW THAT BOUTROS HAS RETURNED FROM LATAKIYA, WE WANT YOU TO SEEK THE EARLIEST POSSIBLE OPPORTUNITY TO OBTAIN FROM HIM A READ-OUT OF THE DISCUSSIONS WITH ASSAD AS WELL AS ANY AGREEMENTS REACHED FOR COPING WITH THE TENSE SECURITY SITUATION IN BEIRUT AND ELSEWHERE. IN VIEW OF OUTBREAKS OF FIGHTING IN BEIRUT SUBURBS OVER LAST TWO DAYS, YOU SHOULD EXERCISE DUE CAUTION FOR YOUR PERSONAL SAFETY IN CONTACTING BOUTROS.

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2. TELL BOUTROS THAT WE ARE CONCERNED OVER RECENT CLASHES KOURA AND THE CEDARS AREA, WHICH REPRESENT GEOGRAPHICAL SPREADING OF CONFRONTATION, AS WELL AS HEIGHTENED TENSIONS AND MAJOR FIGHTING TODAY IN BEIRUT SUBURBS. WE WOULD APPRECIATE HIS FRANK APPRECIATION OF THE ORIGIN OF THESE DEVELOPMENTS, INCLUDING INTENTIONS OF BOTH MARONITE

MILITIAS AND THE SYRIAN FORCES. MORE THAN ANYTHING ELSE AT THIS JUNCTURE, WE NEED BEST POSSIBLE GOL READING OF SYRIAN INTENTIONS - SHORT-RUN AND LONGER-RUN. DO SYRIANS INTEND TO TRY TO DESTROY THE MILITARY AND POLITICAL POWER OF THE CHRISTIAN MARONITES? ARE THEY CONCERNED OVER ISRAELI ATTITUDES? OR ISRAELI SUPPLY EFFORTS?

3. IF BOUTROS BELIEVES SYRIAN INTENTIONS ARE NO MORE THAN WHAT SYRIANS HAVE INDICATED PREVIOUSLY, EXPLORE WITH HIM WHETHER THERE IS ANY EFFECTIVE WAY THE SYRIANS COULD MAKE A MORE PERSUASIVE CASE. IF RPT IF BOUTROS SUSPECTS SYRIANS HAVE MORE AMBITIOUS OBJECTIVES THAN MAINTENANCE OF SECURITY AND ORDER, MAKE CLEAR THAT THIS COULD BE EXTREMELY DANGEROUS, PARTICULARLY IN LIGHT OF OBVIOUS ISRAELI CONCERNS AS REVEALED IN PUBLIC STATEMENTS, AND THAT SOME WAY MUST BE FOUND QUICKLY TO DISSUADE SYRIA FROM COURSE FILLED WITH PERILS.

4. ASK BOUTROS FOR ANY SUGGESTIONS GOL MAY HAVE REGARDING WAYS IN WHICH USG MIGHT BE HELPFUL IN THIS DIFFICULT MOMENT.

5. IF THE TALK PERMITS, YOU MAY NOTE THAT SOUTH LEBANON HAS REMAINED RELATIVELY QUIET; THE UPCOMING DEBATE ON RENEWAL OF UNIFIL MAY START SEPTEMBER 15 AND WALDHEIM'S REPORT PRECEDING IT MAY POSE VERY DIFFICULT QUESTIONS.

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WE WOULD APPRECIATE HEARING BOUTROS' IDEAS ON THIS QUESTION AS WELL AS ANY OBSERVATIONS THE SYRIANS MAY HAVE MADE AT LATAKIYA ON THE MOVE TO THE SOUTH AND THE ENCLAVES. CHRISTOPHER

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